

# POTOMAC VALLEY RADIO CLUB

est. 1947

## MAY 1993 NEWSLETTER

### OFFICERS

PRESIDENT - K3NA ERIC SCACE (301) 293-2448  
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HISTORIAN - W3GN LAWRENCE FADNER (301) 725-1624

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The Potomac Valley Radio Club meets the second Monday of each month, from September through May. Regular business meetings alternate between Northern Virginia and Temple Hills, MD. For directions to the next meeting, see below. Or call any club officer.

PVRC CHARTER MEMBERS: W3GRF, W3IKN, W4AAV (SK), W4KFC (SK), W4KFT, N0FFZ, W4LUE, W7YS, VP2VI (W0DX).

Charter Members are not required to pay dues.

VHF Repeater (K3WX): Output 147.00 MHz., Input 146.40 MHz.

UHF Repeater (K3WX): Output 443.15 MHz., Input 448.15 MHz.

### Packet Cluster Contest/DX System:

145.51 MHz. Connect to W0YVA  
145.57 MHz. Connect to N2FB  
145.59 MHz. Connect to W3LPL  
145.63 MHz. Connect to K3NA  
145.77 MHz. Connect to N4SR

### Next Meeting:

Date: 10 May 1993  
Place: Tysons-Pimmit Library  
7584 Leesburg Pike  
Falls Church, VA  
Time: 1930 Hours EDST

Check with the packet cluster or the repeater for last minute changes, if any.

### DIRECTIONS to the Virginia meeting:

Take the Capital Beltway to exit 10. Take Route 7 (Leesburg Pike) toward Falls Church and the Library will be on your left approximately 1.7 miles in from the Beltway, past George Marshall High School. The Library is on your left just before you arrive at Peach Orchard Road.

### PIZZA... AFTER THE MEETING:

Leaving the Library, turn right on Route 7. Cross over the Beltway. Continue on past the original Tyson's Corner Mall to the light at International Drive. Go further on Route 7 one block after the light to Watson Street and turn right. Pizza Hut is halfway up the hill on your left.

Editor: Fred Laun, K3ZO (301) 899-1235  
News Deadline: 20th each month.

## MUSINGS OF THE EDITOR...

Have you answered the questionnaire prepared by Bill, W3AZ, yet? If not, mail it to him right away. The results will do a lot to help this club expend its contest resources in the most efficient way. Please do it today.

June 4-5-6 brings the annual PVRC Reunion. The special Reunion mailing will go out soon.

Summer meetings are social get-togethers at which little business is handled. The line-up of summer meetings tentatively looks like this:

June: PVRC Field Day at W3YOZ

July: Joint PVRC/Frankford Radio Club meeting at W3LPL

August: Joint NCDXA/PVRC meeting at W3YOZ/N3HIT.

Look for exact dates on the title pages of the June and July issues of this *Newsletter*.

There will be at least one item of business discussed at the joint FRC/PVRC meeting because it concerns both clubs. While I was at the Visalia DX Convention, W6OAT and K7SS asked me to relay to PVRC and FRC the request from the West Coast gang that FRC and PVRC jointly agree to host a 1994 version of the World Radiosport Team Championships, similar to those held in the Seattle area in 1990. They said that it would be a shame to let this initiative die on the vine.

At Dayton I ran this idea by N3RD and W2GD of FRC and our own President K3NA and received a generally positive reaction. It was agreed that the idea would be discussed in detail at the joint meeting.

For those not closely familiar with the original WRTC affair, approximately 15 two-person operator teams from various countries would compete with each other in an on-the-air contest closely monitored by on-site judges. What FRC and PVRC would jointly have to provide is approximately 15 different stations of roughly equal capabilities, which means tribanders for 10-15-20 and dipoles for 40-80.

The stations would be barefoot and use identical equipment provided by an equipment manufacturer who would reap publicity as a result. You will be hearing more about this as time goes on.

For those of you who haven't been to meetings lately, be advised that your club officers have been coming up with some very interesting programs.

April found W3LPL expounding on the physical characteristics of the ionosphere as determined by recent scientific studies. I will return to this in more detail in future *Newsletters*, but just briefly the old idea of discrete bounces of radio waves between layers of the ionosphere and the earth's surface is probably a gross simplification of what actually occurs. Frank gave a fascinating presentation and the only drawback was that there wasn't really enough time at the meeting for the subject to be explored in the depth it deserved.

The May meeting will feature a visitor from ARRL HQ's Contest Desk who will describe the log-checking procedure used in ARRL Contests. Don't miss it.

And finally, I debated long and hard about mentioning the following subject because it would appear that I am blowing my own horn in the process, but I concluded that the event is so important to PVRC's history that it simply has to be mentioned here, especially since no President's or Secretary's column was received this month.

At the first annual Contest Dinner in Dayton, six more amateurs were inducted into the CQ Contest Hall of Fame. They were W4KFC, W1WY, W7RM, W3AU, W2PV and some guy who uses the call K3ZO.

As most of you know, four of the six have been intimately associated with PVRC, and the recognition received is at the same time an acknowledgement of the key role this club has played in the history of radio contesting. Our

own "Mr. Contest," Len Chertok, joined the Hall of Fame earlier, in 1991.

A historic wrong was righted when the CQ Contest Committee determined that it would, after all, give the Hall of Fame Award posthumously. This allowed belated recognition of a person who is universally recognized as the greatest radio contester who ever lived. I am, of course, referring to Vic Clark, W4KFC, who had died before the Contest Hall of Fame was established by CQ.

For most of you it is unnecessary for me to enumerate W4KFC's accomplishments; indeed, a lot of you knew him longer and better than I did. But I can tell you what he meant to me.

Vic was larger than life. He lived and breathed ham radio. As a Cub scout, I read an account of Vic in the scouting magazine *Boys' Life*. This article was a major factor in my determination to get involved in ham radio. Before that time, though I had taught myself Morse Code, I had never read anything about a real live ham.

Of course in the very first SS I ever entered I worked W4KFC along with W3GRF, W3JTC, W3MSR, W3JTK and some of the other leading PVRC lights of the time. But my heart really began beating when I heard W4KFC calling "CQ Sheboygan" one night on the low end of 40. I was only 15 miles from Sheboygan so I answered the CQ and attempted to reach by telephone the amateur Vic was looking for (W7KWC/9) without success. I sent Vic a QSL and received a very nice reply (on the famous PVRC QSL design of the day) informing me that he had managed to work W7KWC/9 the night following our QSO. This QSL became one of the proudest possessions of a 16-year-old ham.

After learning that I would be coming to Washington to work for USIA I wrote Vic inquiring how to become a member of PVRC and received a very prompt and detailed reply. Upon joining the club I was treated as an equal by Vic even though I was about half his age at the time. When he began to pressure the ARRL Board to set up the Contest Advisory Committee (CAC) -- the Advisory Committee

concept was Vic's idea, as were so many other facets of ham radio we take for granted these days -- he did me the great honor of asking me to sign the original letter to the Board suggesting that this be done, along with W3GRF and one other amateur (who was it, Lenny?)

When I received my assignment to the Dominican Republic and found I could not get on the air there because I could not get our Embassy's Economic Attache to agree to negotiate a reciprocal operating agreement with the Dominican Government, guess who I wrote to to raise a little hell back here in Washington? Need I go on to add that after all the hell Vic raised up here, the Economic Officer was in very short order begging me to help him get an agreement signed with the Dominicans, and I was happy to oblige, of course.

Then a revolution broke out there and VOA sent a reporter down to the Dominican Republic to cover it. The destruction caused by the warring parties disrupted the existing commercial overseas communications facilities and the VOA correspondent had no way to get his material back to the VOA Newsroom. In short order, Vic set up a net of PVRC members and W3DVO (who VOA had posted to Santo Domingo on TDY) and I sent the reporter's daily dispatches to VOA on 20 meter CW.

Later Vic got involved in ARRL and IARU politics and in preparation for WARC 79 he decided that it would be necessary to keep the radio societies in Latin America much better informed of the issues so that they could have an impact on their national delegations to the WARC. So he founded *IARU Region 2 News* and invited me to join its staff along with PVRC members LU1BAR, LU2DX and CX1EK.

As it turned out it was the solidarity of the Latin American delegations which carried the day for amateur radio at WARC 79, leading directly to the preservation of our 40 meter amateur band, which we came within a whisker of losing to the broadcasters, and the creation of what we now know as the "WARC Bands". And, more than any other single factor, it was *IARU Region 2 News* that enabled

Latin American Member Societies of IARU to obtain the information they needed to keep their countries' delegations informed.

Every time I would return home from another overseas assignment Vic would invite me out to lunch and at the ARRL's expense I would brief him in detail about the state of amateur radio in that country.

I haven't even mentioned Vic's contest achievements because most of you know them well. Contesting remained Vic's first love, but to me he was the greatest amateur who ever lived because of his unparalleled impact on all aspects of amateur radio, and I just thought a brief accounting of my own experiences would help illustrate this.

Nevertheless had it not been for contesting and the constant challenge it provided Vic to improve himself and his equipment, he might very well have turned his attention to other pastimes, which would have been a tremendous loss for amateur radio and for all of us.

These days we must put up with the incoherent rantings of rabidly anti-contest Johnny-come-latelies to our hobby who have no knowledge of or appreciation for the way contesting and the history of development of amateur radio techniques and equipment have been inevitably intertwined. The history of Vic Clark is the most notable case of how an amateur who was principally a tester had a tremendous impact on all aspects of amateur radio, but there have been countless others.

And now a plea for help. How about some of you who had a longer association with Vic than I did writing something about your Vic experiences for this *Newsletter*? I know it's a lot of work to put something down on paper, so give me a call at 301-899-1235 and I'll hook up my cassette recorder to the phone and we'll get it down orally for me to transcribe later.

Ed Bissell, W3AU (formerly W3MSK), was a pioneer in assembling multi-multi contest stations. Many of us benefitted as youngsters

from W3AU's version of a contest academy in real time. Basically Ed provided us with a first-class contest station. He did the station maintenance and most of the antenna work; all we had to do was operate.

Some pretty outstanding operators learned a lot about contesting at the W3MSK/W3AU facility. Jack Colson, W3TMZ, organized the operation there for some years, and was succeeded by Bob Cox, K3EST. Among the other operators I recall operating with there were W3FYS (later W6UA), W6HOH/W3NPZ (later W6UM), W3EIS/W3IN (later N4IN), W3AZD, WA3HRV/K3RV, W3ZKH/N4RV, K9OPF/K4GKD, K1ANV/W3BQV (later W3ZZ), K3LR, WA2LQZ (now K1AR), N4FK, W4MYA, KT4W and W8CQN (later N4KG).

Some interesting propagation paths were discovered by the giant antennas at W3AU (or perhaps co-discovered with K2GL/WA2ZAA/N2AA, the other big east coast multi of the era). For example, you could work JA's at 4 AM beaming over the South Atlantic on 15. You could work 9M2's and HS's at 9 PM on 15 beaming over ZL.

It was also discovered that "the higher the better" was not always a good rule of thumb for antennas. His 7-el 20 meter yagi at 120 feet was a bomb at times but 30-foot high tribanders could take it to the cleaners into Europe at mid-day.

The team would gradually roll in on Friday afternoon and those who were there in time for an early dinner before the contest began would assemble around the dinner table with Ed and his lovely XYL (and son Eddie and daughter Nikki) and plot strategy for the contest that was about to begin. Then the team would head for the basement and the battle with K2GL -- and later also with W4BVV -- was joined.

Ed was like a congenial father-figure who looked on from the background while his station was put through its paces by "his youngsters". He jumped into action when a failure in equipment or antennas necessitated his intervention. No weather was ever severe



enough to keep Ed off a tower when something up there had to be fixed. Ed didn't do much operating unless an operator unexpectedly didn't show up. Ed's specialty was finding 10 meter openings that weren't supposed to exist in low-sunspot years.

In the W3MSK/W3AU glory years the natural advantage of New England had not yet been discovered. For one thing, the tremendous volume of European and Japanese stations wasn't there in those years. The U.S. economy was by far the strongest in the world and the European and Asian economies were still pulling out of the war years. Maybe half of the amateurs in those countries could not afford store-bought rigs and had to "roll their own." Governments were suspicious of private radios and it was harder to get a license in many countries. For some time there was a quota in the ARRL CW contest and only six stations per country per band could be worked. Thus search-and-pounce was used far more frequently and running by U.S. stations was a fairly new operating technique.

On the other hand countries in Africa had only recently become independent or were still colonies of European powers and thus there were many more African stations on the air than there are today. Many Latin American countries had become wealthy trading with both sides during the war and there was considerable activity from there. Many Middle Eastern countries were more active than they are today as foreign oilmen and military personnel operated from these spots, many of them still European colonies.

Thus the W1's did not have the advantage that they have today, and the mid-Atlantic was not such a bad place to be contesting from. There was a period when the gang at K2GL despaired of ever being able to beat W3AU again.

It should not be forgotten that before Ed moved to Accokeek and established his monster multi-multi operation, he had shown the world some pretty fancy single operating from the old hilltop W3MSK QTH in Forest Heights. Today Ed is in Florida and though he still has a few AB-105's stabbing into the air, W3AU is not

very active. K3LYW & Co. recently dismantled what was left of the Accokeek antenna farm. Thanks, Ed, for giving so many of us an unforgettable contest experience in our formative operating years!

As for Rush Drake, W4ESK/W7ESK/W7RM, his contest beginnings were also right here in PVRC-land, even though his principal fame grew out of the contest station he later constructed near Seattle. Rush was a PVRC member almost at the start of the club, as he was one of those whose communications skills had made him valuable to the armed forces, which stationed him in Washington to help run the legendary military radio stations of the era.

By the time I got to this area, Rush didn't live here any more, but he still came to the DC area to operate phone DX contests at the W3GRF QTH, since Lenny was not exactly a fan of phone operating. In those days Rush used the call K3UDX when he was out here -- yes, at that time the FCC let you have as many calls as you wanted. I recall that at times Rush even shipped his own amplifier out here just for a particular contest, since he was not happy with the phone performance of Lenny's amplifiers, which were made for CW. UPS didn't exist in those days and what we had was something called Railway Express. Shipping something like an amplifier across the country just for a contest was considered very unusual then, but that didn't stop Rush from doing it.

Later, of course, inspired by what he had experienced as a member of PVRC, Rush established the big West Coast multi and many of today's stalwart W6 and W7 contesters got their start there. One who comes to my mind is K7JA, who worked so many JA's from Rush's place that he decided to learn the language, which in turn led to Chip's obtaining the senior position with Yaesu that he holds today.

Today Rush operates from Southern Washington state, having torn down his old contest station near Seattle and started building another one from scratch. Though Rush has been having some health problems,

the station is now pretty well finished and Rush is reportedly looking for today's generation of youngsters to staff it.

This has not been a complete account of the accomplishments of either Vic, Rush or Ed, but I hope it has served to describe their strong ties to PVRC and their roles in establishing the PVRC legend.

As to my own entry to this select group, even to be included among the likes of W4KFC and W3GRF is like an impossible dream. I know I have principally W3GRF and W3ZZ to thank for this honor, and to Len and Gene I say "thank you" from the bottom of my heart. When Bob

Cox called me to let me know a couple of weeks before Dayton, nothing could have been further from my mind. I remain, simply, overwhelmed.

And let's thank CQ for its support of this award and its sponsorship of contests. We are told by some know-nothings that information about contests is the last thing most amateurs want to read, yet CQ has prospered and its advertising lineage has continued to grow while *Ham Radio* fell by the wayside and 73 is a shadow of its former self. Can it be that Dick Ross and Al Dorhoffer know something that the AB4YP's of the world don't?

## THE 36TH ANNUAL CQ WORLD-WIDE CW WPX CONTEST

by Larry Schimelpfenig, K7SV

coming to an HF band near you soon

When? Sat May 29-30 0000Z Saturday - 2400Z Sunday

Operate 36 of the 48 hour period

WHY?

1. Contribute to the club score
2. It's CW
3. Because of nr 2 it's got to be fun
4. K3ZJ is guaranteed not to be in this one, so you don't have to worry about stealing his frequency.
5. If you really want to steal someone's frequency, take mine. Better it go to a PVRCer than someone from FRC, YCCC, or NCCC!
6. Warm up for that non-contest event called Field Day.
7. Do you really have anything better to do during the Memorial Day weekend?
8. Give your new beverages the real acid test!
9. Reclaim a record for U.S.A. if you are KT3Y!

RULES IN FEBRUARY 1993 CQ. IF YOU PLAN ON OPERATING, HOW ABOUT LETTING ME KNOW WITH A PROJECTED SCORE - K7SV>N4SR - 703-972-3308

## OVER-THE-HILL DIVISION

Andy Andersen, W3XE, hosted the March 24 session at the Sheraton in New Carrollton, Md.

Present were KO0U, W3XE, W3LPL, K3ZO, W3ZZ, W3CPB, W3ABC, AA4XU, W3GN, W6AXX, W3AZ, AA4I, KC3AG, W3UJ and W4DM. Get-well cards were signed for W3GRF, W4EZ and W4GF. W3LPL fielded a lot of questions on the operation of the PVDXSN Packetcluster™.

On April 28, Len Chertok, W3GRF, convened the group at the Ramada Inn at Oxon Hill, Md. Attending were W3XE, W3Q, W3GRF, W4DM, W3AZ, W3CPB, K3ZO, W3ABC, K3WX, AA4I and KC3AG. Among the items discussed were the "good old days" when AB-105 could be had for a song; and the rabidly anti-contest president of a 10-10 Chapter in Arlington.

## NEWS ABOUT MEMBERS

On my recent trip to Visalia, flying from Dulles to Los Angeles on a United 757, I was worried about what would happen if the Los Angeles jury announced its decision just before I drove a rent-a-car out of LAX International, four miles from the center of last year's riots. USA Today Skyradio to the rescue! This real-time news service for commercial aircraft in flight, selectable on one of the audio channels available to passengers at their seats, was engineered by none other than our own N3RR and immortalized on film by PVRC's WZ3Q. I learned that a member of the jury had taken sick and thus there would be no decision that day. I arrived at LAX much relieved. Thanks guys!

Someone at Visalia told me he had sold an 80 meter beam like mine to K3ZJ. I checked with Dave after I got back home and found out it is indeed true. It is lying dis-assembled on the ground up there in West Virginia along with other future K3ZJ antennas and if the weather permits should be up in the air by the fall contest season.

Dallas, K3WUW, is headed for an assignment at the American Embassy in Bangkok in June and you should hear a lot from Zone 26 for the next three years from HS0ZB-something -- exact call as yet unknown.

Roger, K1DQV, has been on extended assignment in Morocco. Will he get back in time to finish converting the K3ZO NCL-2000

to six meters in time for the ARRL June VHF Contest?

President K3NA will shortly challenge the elements with monobanders in response to the destruction of his tribander in one of this past winter's ice storms.

Carl, K3RV, has been making a lot of noise as G0SLY and GD0SLY. It is reported that his new QSL Manager WA3CGE, in addition to handling QSL's for these two calls, will clear up the backlog of EL2CX QSL's which previous manager -- or should we say "mismanager" -- N2AU was unable to handle. Ask Ken, KH2F, about N2AU sometime, but insert earplugs first!

Joe, K5KT, was seen by your scribe at Visalia and asked to be remembered to the PVRC crowd. Joe looks fine and paid another two years' dues to me for PVRC.

Ken, K6IR, was recently featured in a QST photo congratulating the retiring president of the Radio Club of America on his long years in that position. Ken is a longtime member of the Radio Club of America, which is to ham radio what the Metropolitan Club is to Washington.

Larry, K7SV, says that the new QTH really plays! Just wait until a linear is going and monobanders are in place! KQ2M and K1AR, beware!

Have you ever felt that you were in a hole? Jerry, K8OQL, says he knows the feeling, situated as he is halfway between the mountaintop QTH's of K3ZJ and K2UOP.

Jo Ann Simpson, KA3WPD, received the "Excellence in Science and Mathematics" award from the Society of Women Engineers at the Prince Georges County Science Fair for her exhibit on the Direction Finding Antenna. Jo Ann represented Thurgood Marshall Middle School at the Fair. She also received an award from the Prince Georges County Science Fair Association for "Worthy and Creditable Achievement."

Sorry to hear from Glenn, KC3EK, that XYL Judy, KA3IDS, has been under the weather. Get well soon, Judy.

Secretary KE3Q was busy transcribing the presentations in the antenna, contest and DX forums at Dayton. These transcripts will be marketed through K3LR's company. This explains the absence of a Secretary's Page this month. Since last month's issue of this rag was practically entirely written by Rich, we can't complain!

Ken, KE9A, is reported to be planning a DXpedition to 5X1-land. Ken's friend KB9CR is on the staff of the American Embassy there, where he operates at 5X1B, and has invited Ken to experience pile-upping from Africa once again. Some time ago Ken made many QSO's as an EL2.

Tyler, KF3P, made a lot of noise in the CQ WPX Phone Contest using the station of Frank, W3LPL. He was neck-and-neck with me most of the way but made the mistake of saving an hour-and-a-half of off-time until late Sunday afternoon. With the higher bands now being so dead in the wee hours of the morning, a single operator should have all of his off-time used up by the time 15 meters opens on Sunday morning. A word to the wise for those planning for the WPX CW Contest later this month!

The dynamic duo of KK4WQ and KC4FYA have recently returned from an extended overseas

trip and are once again making QRM on the bands.

Mike, KO7V, thought he had seen late snowstorms during his tour of duty in Illinois, but the April 22 mess between Gaithersburg and Frederick took the cake! Add to that the 1-1/2-hour traffic tie-up in Western PA on the way back and one might almost expect Mike to take a plane the next time he goes to Dayton. Residents of Oxon Hill, where Mike lives, have lately been entertained by a pirate FM broadcast station on 104.5 MHz.

Yours truly was surprised by the strength of Mark, KX3Q's, 40-meter signal during my stay at HS0ZAR. The beam is working, Mark!

Craig, KZ3H, is temporarily limited to the 80 and 160 meter bands while rotator problems are attended to. The LU's, VK's and ZS's will be happy that there is at least one W willing to listen for them there during their low-noise winter season.

What's this about N2FB thinking about moving because of growing crime in the Padgett's Corner area? Relax, Wayne, Temple Hills is only 5 miles from the murder capital of the world but Somporn and I are staying for the duration!

Congrats to Hani, N3IWM/OD5RH, who has passed his U.S. Extra Class ticket and by now should be sporting a brand new AA3 call. Not bad for someone whose native tongue is Arabic and who came here to study less than five years ago!

Jim, N3JT, once again did a sterling job of managing the FOC's annual Washington convention.

I had the good fortune to dine with Pete, N4KW, in Dayton and learned that he had operated from Laos as XW8BV even before I had operated as HS3AL and HS5ABD from neighboring Thailand. If someone worked every PVRC member who has operated from overseas at every location they each operated from, he would probably be on the DXCC Honor Roll by virtue of these QSO's alone.



# MARYLAND RADIO CENTER

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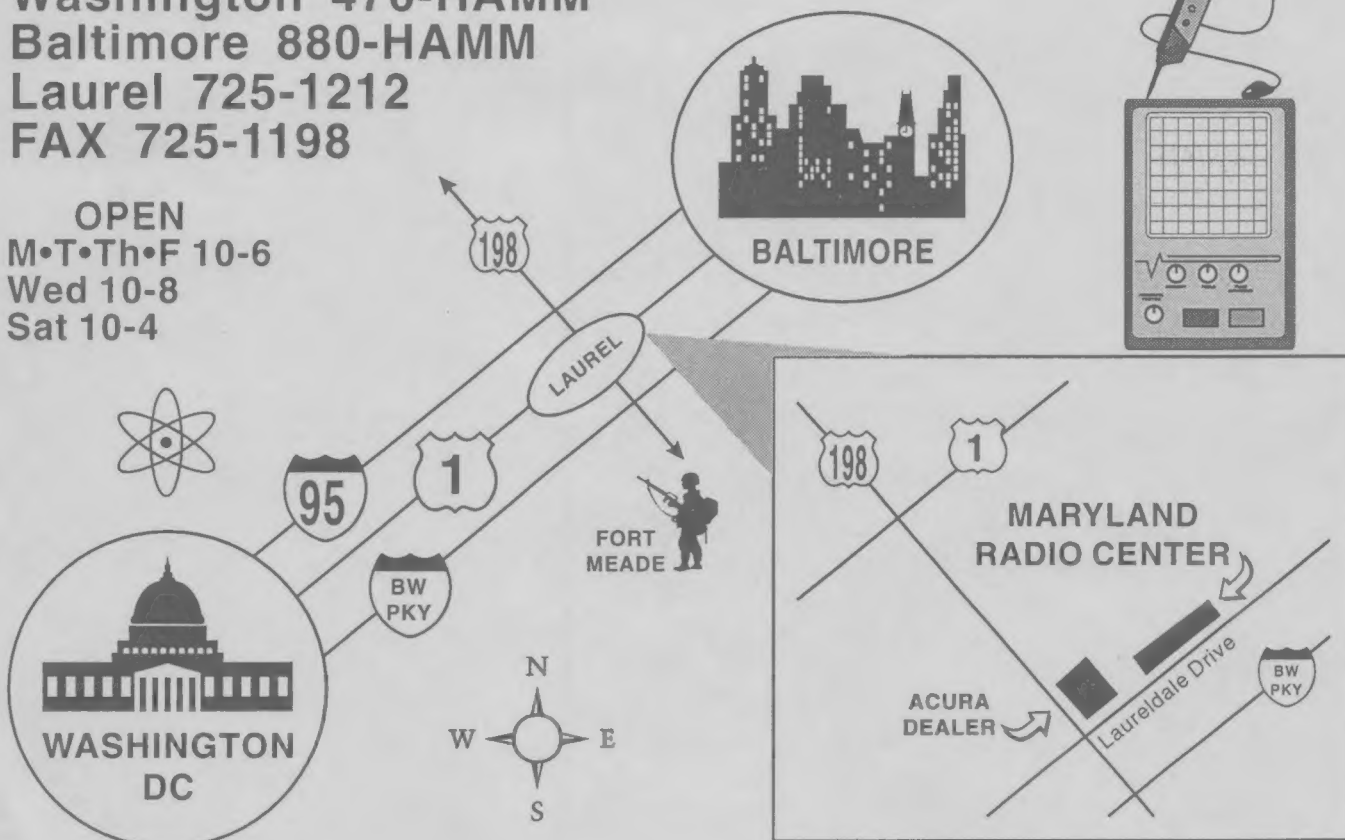
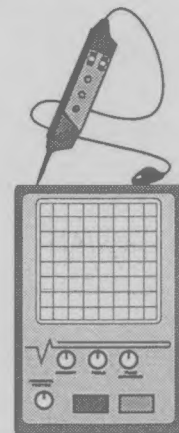
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FIRST CLASS

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